2 DN 1773 Northampton

4486.aaa.9.
10

Mr. *Edwards*'s

DISCOURSE,

On Romans III. 19.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS.

A

DISCOURSE

Delivered at Northampton,

AT THE

Time of the late wonderful Revival of Religion there.

By *Jonathan Edwards*, A.M.

Late Paſtor of the Church of CHRIST in *Northampton*.

BOSTON:

Re-printed and Sold by J. KNEELAND, next to the Treaſurer's Office, in Milk-Street.

MD CCLXXIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

The Juſtice of GOD in the Damnation of Sinners.

ROMANS III. 19.

—*And every Mouth ſhall be ſtopped.*—

THE main ſubject of the doctrinal part of this epiſtle, is the free grace of God, in the ſalvation of men by Jeſus Chriſt; eſpecially as it appears in the doctrine of juſtification by faith alone. And the more clearly to evince this doctrine, and ſhew the reaſon of it, the Apoſtle, in the firſt place, eſtabliſhes that point, that no fleſh living can be juſtified by the deeds of the law. And to prove it, he is very large and particular in ſhewing, that all mankind, not only Gentiles, but Jews, are *under ſin*, and ſo under the condemnation of the law; which is what he inſiſts upon from the beginning of the epiſtle to this place. He firſt begins with the *Gentiles*; and in the firſt chapter, ſhews that they are *under ſin*, by ſetting forth

forth the exceeding corruptions and horrid wickedneſs, that overſpead the gentile world: And then through the ſecond chapter, and the former part of this third chapter, to the text and following verſe, he ſhews the ſame of the *Jews*, that they alſo are in the ſame circumſtances with the Gentiles, in this regard. They had an high thought of themſelves, becauſe they were God's covenant people, and circumciſed, and the children of *Abraham*. They deſpiſed the Gentiles, as polluted, condemned, and accurſed; but looked on themſelves, on account of their external privileges, and ceremonial and moral righteouſneſs, as a pure and holy people, and the children of God; as the Apoſtle obſerves in the ſecond chapter. It was therefore ſtrange doctrine to them, that they alſo were unclean and guilty in God's ſight, and under the condemnation and curſe of the law. The Apoſtle does therefore, on account of their ſtrong prejudices againſt ſuch doctrine, the more particularly inſiſt upon it, and ſhews that they are no better than the Gentiles; as in the 9th verſe of this chapter, *What then? Are we better than they? No in no wiſe; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin.* And to convince them of it, he then produces certain paſſages out of their own law, or the old teſtament, (whoſe authority they pretended a great regard to,) from the 9th verſe to the verſe wherein is our text. And it may be obſerved, that the Apoſtle, *firſt*, cites certain paſſages to prove that mankind are *all* corrupt, in the 10, 11, and 12 verſes; as it is written, *There is* none *righteous, no* not one: *There is* none *that underſtandeth: There is* none *that ſeeketh after God: They are* all *gone out of the way: They are* together *become unprofitable: There is* none *that doth*

doth good; *no* not one. *Secondly*, The paſſages he cites next, are to prove that not only are *all* corrupt, but each one *wholly* corrupt, as it were all over unclean, from the crown of his head, to the ſoles of his feet; and therefore ſeveral particular parts of the body are mentioned, as the *throat*, the *tongue*, the *lips*, the *mouth*, the *feet*, verſes 13, 14, 15. *Their* throat *is an open ſepulchre, with their* tongues *they have uſed deceit, the poiſon of aſps is under their* lips; *whoſe* mouth *is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their* feet *are ſwift to ſhed blood.* And *thirdly*, He quotes other paſſages to ſhew, that *each one* is not only *all over* corrupt, but corrupt *to a deſperate degree*, in the 16, 17, and 18 verſes; in which the exceeding degree of their corruption is ſhewn, both by *affirming* and *denying*: By *affirmatively* expreſſing the moſt pernicious nature and tendency of their wickedneſs, in the 16th verſe. *Deſtruction and miſery are in their ways.* And then by *denying* all good, or godlineſs, of them, in the 17 & 18 verſes, *And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.* And then, leſt the *Jews* ſhould think theſe paſſages of their law don't concern them, and that only the *Gentiles* are intended in them, the Apoſtle ſhews in the verſe of the text, not only that *they* are not exempt, but that *they* eſpecially muſt be underſtood, *Now we know, that whatſoever things the law ſaith, it ſaith to them that are under the law.* By thoſe that are *under the law*, is meant the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles* by thoſe that are *without law*; as appears by the 12th verſe of the preceeding chapter. There is ſpecial reaſon to underſtand the law, as ſpeaking *to* and *of* them, to whom it was immediately given. And therefore the *Jews* would be unreaſonable in exempting themſelves. And if we examine

amine the places of the old teſtament, whence theſe paſſages are taken, we ſhall ſee plainly that ſpecial reſpect is had to the wickedneſs of the people of that nation, in every one of them. So that the law ſhuts all up in univerſal and deſperate wickedneſs, *that every mouth may be ſtopped.* The mouths of the *Jews*, as well as of the *Gentiles*; notwithſtanding all thoſe privileges by which they were diſtinguiſhed from the *Gentiles.*

The things that the law ſays, are ſufficient to ſtop the mouths of all mankind, in two reſpects.

1. To ſtop them from boaſting of their righteouſneſs, as the *Jews* were wont to do; as the Apoſtle obſerves in the 23d. verſe of the preceeding chapter. —That the Apoſtle has reſpect to ſtopping their mouths in this reſpect, appears by the 27th verſe of the context, *Where is boaſting then? It is excluded.* The law ſtops our mouths from making of any plea for life, or the favour of God, or any poſitive good, from our own righteouſneſs.

2. To ſtop them from making any excuſe for our ſelves, or objection againſt the execution of the ſentence of the law, or the infliction of the puniſhment that it threatens. That this is intended, appears by the words immediately following, *That all the world may become guilty before God.* That is, that they may appear to be guilty, and ſtand convicted before God, and juſtly liable to the condemnation of his law, as *guilty of death*, according to the jewiſh way of ſpeaking.

And thus the apoſtle proves that no fleſh can be juſtified in God's ſight, by the deeds of the law; as he draws the concluſion in the following verſe; and ſo prepares the way for the eſtabliſhing of the great doctrine of juſtification by faith alone, which he proceeds to do, in the next verſe to that, and in the following part of the chapter, and of the epiſtle.

DOCT.

DOCTRINE.

'Tis juſt with God eternally to caſt off, and deſtroy ſinners.

——For this is the puniſhment which the law condemns to; which the things that the law ſays, may well ſtop every mouth from all manner of objection againſt.

The truth of this doctrine may appear, by the joint conſideration of two things, *viz. Man's ſinfulneſs*, and *God's ſovereignty.*

I. It appears from the conſideration of Man's ſinfulneſs. And that whether we conſider *the infinitely evil nature of all ſin*, or *how much ſin men are guilty of.*

1. If we conſider the infinite evil, and heinouſneſs of ſin in general. 'Tis not unjuſt in God to inflict what puniſhment is deſerved; becauſe the very notion of deſerving any puniſhment is, that it may be juſtly inflicted: A deſerved puniſhment and a juſt puniſhment are the ſame thing. To ſay that one deſerves ſuch a puniſhment, and yet to ſay that he don't juſtly deſerve it, is a contradiction; and if he juſtly deſerves it, then it may be juſtly inflicted.

Every crime or fault deſerves a greater or leſſer puniſhment, in proportion as the crime itſelf is greater or leſs. If any fault deſerves puniſhment, then ſo much the greater the fault, ſo much the greater is the puniſhment deſerved. The faulty nature of any thing, is the formal ground and reaſon of its deſert of puniſhment; and therefore the more any thing hath of this nature, the more puniſhment it deſerves. And therefore the terribleneſs of the degree of puniſhment, let it be never ſo terrible, is no argument againſt the juſtice of it, if the proportion does but hold, between the heinouſneſs of the crime, and the dreadfulneſs of the puniſhment. So that if

there be any ſuch thing as a fault infinitely heinous, it will follow that 'tis juſt to inflict a puniſhment for it, that is infinitely dreadful.

A crime is more or leſs heinous, according as we are under greater or leſſer obligations to the contrary. This is ſelf-evident, becauſe it is herein that the criminalneſs, or faultineſs of any thing conſiſts, that it is contrary to what we are obliged or bound to, or what ought to be in us. So the faultineſs of one being's hating another, is in proportion to his obligation to love him: The crime of one being's deſpiſing, and caſting contempt on another, is proportionably more or leſs heinous as he was under greater or leſſer obligations to honour him: The fault of diſobeying another, is greater or leſs, as any one is under greater or leſſer obligations to obey him. And therefore if there be any being, that we are under infinite obligations to love, and honour, and obey, the contrary towards him muſt be infinitely faulty.

Our obligation to love, honour, and obey any being, is in proportion to his lovelineſs, honourableneſs, and authority. For that is the very meaning of the words, when we ſay any one is very lovely; it is the ſame as to ſay, that he is one very much to be loved: Or if we ſay ſuch an one is more honourable than another; the meaning of the words is, that he is one that we are more obliged to honour. If we ſay any one has great authority over us, 'tis the ſame as to ſay that he has great right to our ſubjection and obedience.

But God is a Being infinitely lovely, becauſe he hath infinite excellency and beauty. To have infinite excellency and beauty, is the ſame thing as to have infinite lovelineſs. He is a Being of infinite greatneſs,

greatneſs, majeſty and glory; and therefore is infinitely honourable. He is infinitely exalted above the greateſt potentates of the earth, and higheſt angels in heaven; and therefore is infinitely more honourable than they. His authority over us is infinite; and the ground of his right to our obedience, is infinitely ſtrong; for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed in himſelf, and we have an abſolute univerſal and infinite dependence upon him. So that ſin againſt God being a violation of infinite obligations, muſt be a crime infinitely heinous; and ſo deſerving of infinite puniſhment.——Nothing is more agreable to the common ſenſe of mankind, than that ſins committed againſt any one, muſt be proportionably heinous, to the dignity of the being offended and abuſed; as 'tis alſo agreable to the word of God. 1 Sam. 2. 25. *If one man ſin againſt another, the Judge ſhall judge him*; (i. e. ſhall judge him, and inflict a finite puniſhment, ſuch as finite judges can inflict;) *but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall intreat for him!* This was the aggravation of ſin that made *Joſeph* afraid of it, Gen. 39. 9. *How ſhall I commit this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* This was the aggravation of *David*'s ſin, in compariſon of which he eſteemed all others as nothing, becauſe they were infinitely exceeded by it. Pſalm 51. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only, have I ſinned.*—The eternity of the puniſhment of ungodly men renders it infinite; and it renders it no more than infinite; and therefore renders no more than proportionable to the heinouſneſs of what they are guilty of.

If there be *any evil* or faultineſs in ſin againſt God, there is certainly *infinite evil*: For if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, *viz.* that it is againſt an infinite object. If it be ever ſo

ſmall upon other accounts ; yet if it be any thing, it has *one* infinite dimenſion ; and ſo is an infinite evil. Which may be illuſtrated by this : If we ſuppoſe a thing to have infinite length, but no breadth and thickneſs, but to be only a meer mathematical line, it is nothing : But if it have any breadth and thickneſs at all, though never ſo ſmall, yet if it have but one infinite dimenſion, *viz.* that of length, the quantity of it is infinite ; it exceeds the quantity of any thing, however broad, thick and long, wherein theſe dimenſions are all finite.

So that the objections that are made againſt the infinite puniſhment of ſin, from the neceſſity, or rather previous certainty of the futurition of ſin, ariſing from the decree of God, or unavoidable original corruption of nature, if they argue any thing, don't argue againſt the *infiniteneſs of the degree* of the faultineſs of ſin *directly*, and *no otherwiſe* than they argue againſt *any* faultineſs *at all :* For if this neceſſity or certainty, leaves any evil at all in ſin, that fault muſt be infinite by reaſon of the infinite object.

But every ſuch objector, as would argue from hence, that there is no fault at all in ſin, confutes himſelf, and ſhews his own inſincerity in his objection. For at the ſame time that he objects, that men's acts are neceſſary, from God's decrees, and original ſin, and that this kind of neceſſity is inconſiſtent with faultineſs in the act, his own practice ſhews that he don't believe what he objects to be true : Otherwiſe why does he at all blame men ? Or why are ſuch perſons at all diſpleaſed with men, for abuſive, injurious, and ungrateful acts towards them ? Whatever they pretend, by this they ſhew that indeed they do believe that there is no neceſſity in men's acts, from divine decrees, or corruption of nature,

nature, that is inconſiſtent with blame. And if their objection be this, That this previous certainty is by God's *own ordering*, and that where God orders an antecedent certainty of acts, he transfers all the fault from the actor on himſelf; their practice ſhews, that at the ſame time they don't *believe this*; but fully believe the contrary: For when they are abuſed *by men*, they are diſpleaſed *with men*, and not with God only.

The light of nature teaches all mankind, that when an injury is voluntary, it is faulty, without any manner of conſideration of what there might be previouſly to determine the futurition of that evil act of the will: And it really teaches this, as much to thoſe that object and cavil moſt, as to others; as their univerſal practice ſhews. By which it appears that ſuch objections are inſincere and perverſe.—— Men will mention others corrupt nature in their own caſe, or when they are injured, as a thing that *aggravates their crime*, and that wherein their *faultineſs* partly *conſiſts*. How common is it for perſons, when they look on themſelves greatly injured by another, to inveigh againſt him, and aggravate his baſeneſs, by ſaying, "He is a man of a moſt perverſe "ſpirit: He is naturally of a ſelfiſh, niggardly, or "proud and haughty temper: He is one of a "baſe and vile diſpoſition." And yet men's natural corrupt diſpoſitions are mentioned as an excuſe for them, with reſpect to their ſins againſt God, and as if they rendered them blameleſs.

2. That it is juſt with God eternally to caſt off wicked men, may more abundantly appear, if we conſider how much ſin they are guilty of. From what has been already ſaid, it appears, that if men were guilty of ſin, but in one particular, that is ſufficient

cient ground of their eternal rejection and condemnation: If they are ſinners, that is enough: Meerly this might be ſufficient to keep them from ever lifting up their heads, and cauſe them to ſmite on their breaſts, with the Publican that cried, *God be merciful to me a ſinner.* But ſinful men are not only thus, but they are *full of ſin*; full of principles of ſin, and full of acts of ſin: Their guilt is like great mountains, heaped one upon another, until the pile is grown up to heaven. They are totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties; and all the principles of their nature, their underſtandings, and wills; and in all their diſpoſitions and affections, their heads, their hearts, are totally depraved; all the members of their bodies are only inſtruments of ſin; and all their ſenſes, ſeeing, hearing, taſting,&c. are only inlets and outlets of ſin, channels of corruption. There is nothing but ſin, no good at all. Rom. 7. 18. *In me, that is in my fleſh, dwells no good thing.* There is all manner of wickedneſs. There are the ſeeds of the greateſt and blackeſt crimes. There are principles of all ſorts of wickedneſs againſt men; and there is all wickedneſs againſt God. There is pride; there is enmity; there is contempt; there is quarrelling; there is atheiſm; there is blaſphemy. There are theſe things in exceeding ſtrength; the heart is under the power of them, is ſold under ſin, and is a perfect ſlave to it. There is hardheartedneſs, hardneſs greater than that of a rock, or an adament ſtone. There is obſtinacy and perverſeneſs, incorrigibleneſs and inflexibleneſs in ſin, that won't be overcome by threatenings or promiſes, by awakenings or encouragements, by judgments or mercies, neither by that which is terrifying, nor that which is winning: The very blood of God won't win the heart of a wicked man. And

And there is *actual* wickedneſſes without number or meaſure. There are breaches of every command, in thought, word, and deed; a life full of ſin; days and nights fill'd up with ſin; mercies abuſed, and frowns deſpiſed; mercy and juſtice, and all the divine perfections trampled on; and the honour of each perſon in the trinity trod in the dirt.—Now if one ſinful word or thought has ſo much evil in it, as to deſerve eternal deſtruction, how do they deſerve to be eternally caſt off and deſtroyed, that are guilty of ſo much ſin!

II. If with man's ſinfulneſs, we conſider God's ſovereignty, it may ſerve further to clear God's juſtice in the eternal rejection and condemnation of ſinners, from men's cavils and objections. I ſhall not now pretend to determine preciſely, what things are, and what things are not, proper acts and excerciſes of God's holy ſovereignty but only that God's ſovereignty extends to the following things.

1. That ſuch is God's *ſovereign power* and *right*, that he is originally under no obligation to keep men from ſinning; but may in his providence permit, and leave them to ſin. He was not obliged to keep either angels or men from falling.—It is unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that God ſhould be obliged, if he makes a reaſonable creature capable of knowing his will, and *receiving a law* from him, and being ſubject to his moral government, at the ſame time to make it impoſſible for him to ſin, or *break his law*. For if God be obliged to this it deſtroys all *uſe* of any commands, laws, promiſes, or threatenings, and the very *notion* of any moral government of God over thoſe reaſonable creatures. For to what purpoſe would it be, for God to give ſuch and ſuch laws, and declare his holy will to a creature, and annex

annex promiſes, and threatenings, to move him to his duty, and make him careful to perform it, if the creature at the ſame time has this to think of, that God is obliged to make it impoſſible for him to break his laws? How can God's *threatenings* move to care or watchfulneſs, when, at the ſame time, God is obliged to render it impoſſible that he ſhould be expoſed *to the threatening?* Or, to what purpoſe is it for God to give a law at all? For according to this ſuppoſition, it is God, and not the creature, that is *under law*. It is the lawgiver's care, and not the ſubjects, to ſee that his law is obeyed; and this care is what the lawgiver is abſolutely obliged to. If God be obliged never to permit a creature to fall, there is an end of all divine laws, or government, or authority of God over the creature; there can be no manner of uſe of theſe things.

God may permit ſin, though the being of ſin will certainly enſue on that permiſſion: And ſo, by permiſſion, he may *diſpoſe* and *order* the event. If there were any ſuch thing as chance, or meer contingence, and the very notion of it did not carry a groſs abſurdity (as might eaſily be ſhown that it does) it would have been very unfit, that God ſhould have left it to meer chance, whether man ſhould fall or no. For chance, if there ſhould be any ſuch thing, is *undeſigning* and *blind*. And certainly it is more fit that an event of ſo great importance, and that is attended with ſuch an infinite train of great conſequences, ſhould be diſpoſed and ordered by infinite *wiſdom*, than that it ſhould be left to *blind* chance.

If it be ſaid that God need not have interpoſed to render it impoſſible for man to ſin, and yet not leave it to meer contingence, or blind chance, neither; but

but might have left it with man's free will, to determine whether to ſin or no: I anſwer, If God did leave it to man's free will, without any ſort of diſpoſal, or ordering in the caſe, whence it ſhould be previouſly certain how that free will ſhould determine, then ſtill that firſt determination of the will, muſt be meerly contingent or by chance. It could not have any antecedent act of the will to determine it; for I ſpeak now of the very firſt act or motion of the will, reſpecting the affair that may be looked upon as the prime ground, and higheſt ſource of the event. To ſuppoſe this to be determined by a foregoing act is a contradiction. God's diſpoſing this determination of the will, by his permiſſion, don't at all infringe the liberty of the creature: It is in no reſpect any more inconſiſtent with liberty, than meer chance or contingence. For if the determination of the will, be from blind, undeſigning chance, it is no more from the agent himſelf, or from the will itſelf, than if we ſuppoſe, in the caſe, a wiſe, divine diſpoſal by permiſſion.

2. It was fit that it ſhould be at the ordering of the divine wiſdom and good pleaſure, whether every particular man ſhould ſtand for himſelf, or whether the firſt father of mankind, ſhould be appointed as the moral and federal head, and repreſentative, of the reſt. If God has not liberty in this matter to determine either of theſe two, as he pleaſes, it muſt be becauſe determining that the firſt father of men ſhould repreſent the reſt, and not that every one ſhould ſtand for himſelf, is injurious to mankind. For if it be not injurious to mankind, how is it unjuſt? But it is not injurious to mankind; for there is nothing in the nature of the caſe it ſelf, that makes it *better* for mankind, that each man ſhould ſtand for himſelf,

ſelf, than that all ſhould be repreſented by their common father; as the leaſt reflection or conſideration will convince any one. And if there be nothing in the nature of the thing, that makes the former better for mankind than the latter, then it will follow, that mankind are not hurt in God's chooſing and appointing the latter, rather than the former; or which is the ſame thing, that it is not injurious to mankind.

3. When men are fallen, and become ſinful, God by his ſovereignty has a right to determine about their redemption as he pleaſes. He has a right to determine whether he will redeem *any* or no. He might, if he had pleaſed, have left all to periſh, or might have redeemed all. Or, he may redeem *ſome*, and leave others; and if he doth ſo, he may take *who he pleaſes*, and leave who he pleaſes. To ſuppoſe that all have forfeited his favour, and deſerved to periſh, and to ſuppoſe that he may not leave any one individual of them to periſh, implies a contradiction; becauſe it ſuppoſes that ſuch an one has a claim to God's favour, and is not juſtly liable to periſh; which is contrary to the ſuppoſition.

It is meet that God ſhould order all theſe things, according to his own pleaſure. By reaſon of his greatneſs and glory, by which he is infinitely above all, he is worthy to be ſovereign, and that his pleaſure ſhould in all things take place: He is worthy that he ſhould make himſelf his end, and that he ſhould make nothing but his own wiſdom his rule in purſuing that end, without aſking leave or counſel of any, and without giving any account of any of his matters.—It is fit that he that is abſolutely perfect, and infinitely wiſe, and the fountain of all wiſdom, ſhould determine every thing by his own will,

will, even things of the greateſt importance, ſuch as the eternal ſalvation or damnation of ſinners. It is meet that he ſhould be thus ſovereign, becauſe he is the firſt Being, the eternal Being, whence all other beings are. He is the Creator of all things ; and all are abſolutely and univerſally dependent on him ; and therefore it is meet that he ſhould act as the ſovereign poſſeſſor of heaven and earth.

APPLICATION.

In the improvement of this doctrine, I would firſt direct myſelf to ſinners that are afraid of damnation, in a uſe of *conviction.*——This may be matter of conviction to you, that it would be juſt & righteous withGod eternally to reject & deſtroy you. This is what you are in danger of : You that are a chriſtleſs ſinner,are a poor condemned creature : God's wrath ſtill abides upon you ; and the ſentence of condemnation lies upon you : You are in God's hands, and it is uncertain what he will do with you. You are afraid what will become of you : You are afraid that it will be your portion to ſuffer eternal burnings ; and your fears are not without grounds ; you have reaſon to tremble every moment. But let you be never ſo much afraid of it, let eternal damnation be never ſo dreadful, yet it is juſt : God may nevertheleſs do it, and be righteous, and holy, and glorious in it. Though eternal damnation be what you can't bear ; and how much ſoever your heart ſhrinks at the thoughts of it, yet God's juſtice may be glorious in it. The dreadfulneſs of the thing *on your part*, and the greatneſs of your dread of it, don't render it the leſs righteous *on God's part.* If you think otherwiſe, it is a ſign that you don't ſee yourſelf, that

you are not ſenſible what ſin is, nor how much of it you have been guilty of. Therefore for your conviction, be directed,

Firſt. To look over your paſt life: Inquire at the mouth of conſcience, and hear what that has to teſtify concerning it. Conſider what you are, what light you have had, and what means you have lived under:—And yet how have you behaved yourſelf! What have thoſe many days and nights, that you have lived, been fill'd up with? How have thoſe years, that have rolled over your heads, one after another, been ſpent? What has the ſun ſhone upon you for, from day to day, while you have improved his light to ſerve ſatan by it? What has God kept your breath in your noſtrils for, and given you meat and drink, from day to day for, that you have ſpent that life and ſtrength that have been ſupported by them, in oppoſing God, and rebellion againſt him?

How many ſorts of wickedneſs have you been guilty of? How manifold have been the abominations of your life? What profaneneſs and contempt of God has been exerciſed by you? How little regard have you had to the ſcriptures, to the word preached, to ſabbaths, and ſacraments? How profanely have you talked, many of you, about thoſe things that are holy? After what manner have many of you kept God's holy day, not regarding the holineſs of the time, not caring what you thought of in it. Yea, you have not only ſpent the time in worldly, vain, and unprofitable thoughts, but in *immoral* thoughts; pleaſing yourſelf with the reflection on paſt acts of wickedneſs, and in contriving new acts. Have not you ſpent much holy time, in gratifying your luſts in your imaginations; yea not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worſhip,

when

when you have appeared in God's more immediate preſence? How have you not only not attended to the worſhip, but have in the mean time been feaſting your luſts, and wallowing yourſelf in abominable uncleanneſs! How many ſabbaths have you ſpent, one after another, in a moſt wretched manner! Some of you not only in worldly and wicked thoughts, but alſo a very wicked outward behaviour! When you on ſabbath-days, have got along with your wicked companions, how has holy time been treated among you! What kind of converſation has there been! Yea, how have ſome of you by a very indecent carriage, openly diſhonoured and caſt contempt on the ſacred ſervices of God's houſe, and holy day! And what you have done, ſome of you, alone, what wicked practices there have been in ſecret, even in holy time, God and your own conſciences know.

And how have you behaved yourſelf in the time of family prayer! And what a trade have many of you made of abſenting yourſelves from the worſhip of the families you belong to, for the ſake of vain company! And how have you continued in the neglect of ſecret prayer! Therein wilfully living in a known ſin, going a-breaſt againſt as plain a command as any in the bible! Have you not been one that has *caſt off fear, and reſtrained prayer before God?*

What wicked carriage have ſome of you been guilty of towards your parents! How far have you been from paying that honour to them, that God has required! Have you not even harboured ill-will, and malice towards them? And when they have diſpleaſed you, have wiſhed evil to them? Yea, and ſhown your vile ſpirit in your behaviour? And it is well if you have not mocked them behind their backs; and like the accurſed *Ham* and *Canaan* derided

rided your parents nakedneſs, inſtead of covering it, and hiding your eyes from it. Have not ſome of you often *diſobeyed* your parents, yea, and refuſed to be ſubject to them? Is it not a wonder of mercy and forbearance, that that has not before now been acompliſhed on you, in Prov. 30. 17. *The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuſeth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the young eagles ſhall eat it.*

What revenge and malice have you been guilty of towards your neighbours? How have you indulged this ſpirit of the devil, hating others, and wiſhing evil to them, rejoicing when evil befell them, and grieving at others proſperity, and lived in ſuch a way for a long time!—Have not ſome of you allowed a paſſionate furious ſpirit, and behaved your ſelves in your anger more like wild beaſts, than like chriſtians?

What covetouſneſs has been in many of you? Such has been your inordinate love of the world, and care about the things of it, that it has taken up your heart; you have allowed no room for God and religion; you have minded the world more than your eternal ſalvation. *For the vanities of the world*, you have neglected reading, praying, and meditation: *For the things of the world*, you have broken the ſabbath: *For the world* you have ſpent a great deal of your time in quarrelling: *For the world* you have envied, and hated your neighbour: *For the world* you have caſt God, and Chriſt, and heaven behind your back: *For the world* you have ſold your own ſoul: You have as it were drowned your ſoul in worldly cares and deſires: You have been a meer earth-worm, that is never in it's element but when grovelling and buried in the earth.

How

How much of a ſpirit of pride has appeared in you! Which is in a peculiar manner the ſpirit and condemnation of the devil. How have ſome of you vaunted yourſelves in your apparel! Others in their riches! Others in their knowlege & abilities! How has it gauled you to ſee others above you! How much has it gone againſt the grain, for you to give others their due honour! And how have you ſhown your pride by ſetting up your wills, and in oppoſing others, and ſtirring up and promoting diviſion, and a party ſpirit in public affairs!

How ſenſual have you been! Are there not ſome here, that have debaſed themſelves below the dignity of human nature, by wallowing in ſenſual filthineſs, as ſwine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have ſome of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you ſpent away at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home ſeeking God, and your ſalvation in your families and cloſets!

And what abominable laciviouſneſs have ſome of you been guilty of! How have you indulged your ſelf, from day to day, and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your ſoul been fill'd with them, until it has become an hold of foul ſpirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul mouth'd perſons have ſome of you been, often in leud and laſcivious talk, and unclean ſongs, wherein were things not fit to be ſpoken! And ſuch company, where ſuch converſation has been carried on, has been your delight.—And what unclean acts and practices have you defiled yourſelf with! God and your own conſciences know what abominable laciviouſneſs you have practiced in

things

things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading, or meditating, or on your knees before God in ſecret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourſelves! What vile uncleanneſs have you practiced in company! What abominations have you been guilty of in the dark! Such as the Apoſtle doubtleſs had reſpect to, in Eph. 5. 12. *For it is a ſhame even to ſpeak of thoſe things, that are done of them in ſecret.* Some of you have corrupted others, and done what in you lay to undo their ſouls; (if you have not actually done it) and by your vile practices and examples, have made room for ſatan, and invited his preſence, and eſtabliſhed his intereſt, in the town where you have lived.

What lying have ſome of you been guilty of, eſpecially in your childhood! And have not your heart and lips often diſagreed, ſince you came to riper years? What fraud, and deceit, and unfaithfulneſs, have many of you practiced in your dealings with your neighbours, that your own heart is conſcious to! if you have not been noted for it by others.

And how have ſome of you behaved yourſelves in your family relations! How have you neglected your children's ſouls! And not only ſo, but have corrupted their minds by your bad examples; and inſtead of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have rather brought them up in the devil's ſervice.

How have ſome of you attended that ſacred ordinance of the Lord's ſupper, without any manner of ſerious preparation, and in a careleſs ſlighty frame of ſpirit, and chiefly to comply with cuſtom! Have you

you not ventured to put the ſacred ſymbols of the *body* and *blood* of Chriſt into your mouth, while at the ſame time you lived in ways of known ſins, and intended no other than ſtill to go on in the ſame wicked practices? And it may be have ſat at the Lord's table, with rancour in your heart againſt ſome of your brethren, that you have ſat there with. You have come even to that holy feaſt of love among God's children, with the leaven of malice and envy in your heart; and ſo have eat and drank judgment to yourſelf.

What ſtupidity and ſottiſhneſs has attended your courſe of wickedneſs! which has appear'd in your obſtinacy under awakening diſpenſations of God's word and providence. And how have ſome of you backſlidden, after you have ſet out in religion, and quenched God's ſpirit after he had been ſtriving with you! And what unſteadineſs, and ſlothfulneſs, and great miſimprovement of God's ſtrivings with you, have you been chargeable with, that have long been the ſubject of them!

Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourſelf, that God is obliged to ſhew you mercy? Are you not after all this aſhamed to talk of it's being hard with God to caſt you off? Does it become one that has lived ſuch a life, to open his mouth to excuſe himſelf, or object againſt God's juſtice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and beſtow on him eternal life! Or to talk of his duties and great pains in religion, and ſuch like things, as if ſuch performances were worthy to be accepted, and to draw God's heart to ſuch a creature! If this has been your manner, does it not ſhew how little you have conſidered your

ſelf, and how little a ſenſe you have had of your own ſinfulneſs?

Secondly. Be directed to conſider, If God ſhould eternally reject and deſtroy you, what an *agreableneſs*, and exact mutual anſwerableneſs, there would be between God's ſo dealing with you, and your ſpirit and behaviour? There would not only be an equality but a ſimilitude. God declares that his dealings with men, ſhall be ſuitable to their diſpoſition and practice. Pſalm 18. 25, 26. *With the merciful man, thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf merciful: With an upright man, thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf upright: With the pure, thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf pure: And with the froward, thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf froward.* How much ſoever you dread damnation, and are affrighted and concerned at the thoughts of it; yet if God ſhould indeed eternally damn you, you would but be met with in your own way: You would be dealt with exactly according to your own dealing; God would but meaſure to you, in the ſame meaſure which you mete.—Surely it is but fair that you ſhould be made to buy in the ſame meaſure in which you ſell.

Here I would particularly ſhew, 1. That if God ſhould eternally deſtroy you, it would be agreable to your treatment of God. 2. That it would be agreable to your treatment of Jeſus Chriſt. 3. That it would be agreable to your behaviour towards your neighbours. 4. That it would be according to your own fooliſh behaviour towards your ſelf.

I. If God ſhould forever caſt you off, it would be exactly agreable to your *treatment of him.* That you may be ſenſible of this, conſider,

1. You never have exerciſed the leaſt degree of *love to God*; and therefore it would be agreable to your

your treatment of him, if he ſhould never expreſs any *love to you.* When God converts and ſaves a ſinner, it is a wonderful and unſpeakable manifeſtation of divine love. When a poor loſt ſoul is bro't home to Chriſt, and has all his ſins forgiven him, and is made a child of God, it will take up a whole eternity to expreſs and declare the greatneſs of that love. And why ſhould God be obliged to expreſs ſuch wonderful love to you, who never exerciſed the leaſt degree of love to him in all your life? You never have loved God who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under obligation to love you, who are all over deformed and loathſome, as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper? You have no benevolence in your heart towards God; you never rejoiced in God's happineſs; if he had been miſerable, and that had been poſſible, you would have liked it as well, as if he were happy; you would not have cared how miſerable he was, nor mourned for it, any more than you now do for the devil's being miſerable: And why then, ſhould God be looked upon as obliged to take ſo much care for your happineſs, as to do ſuch great things for it, as he doth for thoſe that are ſaved? Or why ſhould God be called hard, in caſe he ſhould not be careful to ſave you from miſery? You care not what becomes of God's glory; you are not diſtreſſed how much ſo ever his honour ſeems to ſuffer in the world: And why ſhould God care any more for your welfare?—Has it not been ſo, that if you could but promote your private intereſt, and gratify your own luſts, you cared not how much the glory of God ſuffered? And why may not God advance his own glory, in the ruin of your welfare, not caring how much your intereſt ſuffers by it? You never

ſo much as ſtirr'd one ſtep, ſincerely making the glory of God your end, or acting from real reſpect to him. And why then is it hard, if God don't do ſuch great things for you, as the changing your nature, raiſing you from ſpiritual death to life, conquering the powers of darkneſs for you, tranſlating you out of the kingdom of darkneſs into the kingdom of his dear Son, delivering you from eternal miſery, and beſtowing eternal glory upon you? You don't uſe to be willing to deny your ſelf for God; you never cared to put your ſelf out of the way for Chriſt: Whenever any thing croſs or difficult came in your way, that the glory of God was concerned in, it has been your manner to ſhun it, and excuſe your ſelf from it: You did not care to hurt your ſelf for Chriſt; that you did not ſee worthy of it: And why then muſt it be looked upon ſuch a hard and cruel thing, if Chriſt has not been pleaſed to ſpill his blood, and be tormented to death for ſuch a ſinner?

2. You have *ſlighted*, and made *light of God*; and why then may not God juſtly *ſlight you?* When ſinners are ſenſible in ſome meaſure of their miſery, they are ready to think it hard that God will take no more notice of them; that he will ſee them in ſuch a lamentable diſtreſſed condition, beholding their burdens and tears, and ſeem to ſlight it, and manifeſt no pity to them. Their ſouls they think are precious; it would be a dreadful thing, if they ſhould periſh, and burn in hell for ever. They don't ſee through it, that God ſhould make ſo light of their ſalvation. But then ought they not to conſider that as their ſouls are precious, ſo is God's honour precious? The honour of the infinite God, the great King of heaven and earth, is a thing of as

great

great importance, (and ſurely may juſtly be ſo eſteemed by God,) as the happineſs of you a poor little worm. But yet you have ſlighted that honour of God, and valued it no more than the dirt under your feet. You have been told that ſuch and ſuch things were contrary to the will of an holy God, and againſt his honour; but you cared not for that. God called upon you, and exhorted you to be more tender of his honour; but you went on without regarding him. Thus have you ſlighted God! And yet, is it hard that God ſhould ſlight you? Are you more honourable than God, that he muſt be obliged to make much of you, how light ſoever you make of him, and his glory?

And you have not only ſlighted God *in time paſt*, but you ſlight him *ſtill*. You indeed now make a pretence and ſhew of honouring him, in your prayers, and attendance on other external duties, & by a ſober countenance, and ſeeming devoutneſs in your words and behaviour; but it is all meer diſſembling. That downcaſt look, and ſeeming reverence, is not from any honour you have to God in your heart; tho' you would have it go ſo, and would have God take it ſo. You that have not believed in Chriſt, have not the leaſt jot of honour to God; that ſhew of it is meerly forced, and what you are driven to by fear, like thoſe mentioned in Pſalm 66. 3. *Through the greatneſs of thy power, ſhall thine enemies ſubmit themſelves to thee.* In the original it is, *ſhall lie unto thee*; that is, yield feigned ſubmiſſion, and diſſemble reſpect and honour to thee. There is a rod held over you, that makes *you* ſeem to pay ſuch reſpect to God. This religion and devotion, even the very appearance of it, would ſoon be gone, and all vaniſh away, if that were removed. Sometimes it may be you weep

in

in your prayers, and in your hearing ſermons, and hope God will take notice of it, and take it for ſome honour; but he ſees it to be all hypocriſy. You weep for your ſelf; you are afraid of hell; and do you think that that is worthy that God ſhould take much notice of you, becauſe you can cry when you are in danger of being damned; when at the ſame time you indeed care nothing for God's honor?

Seeing you thus diſregard ſo great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to ſlight you, a little, wretched, deſpicable creature; a worm, a meer nothing, and leſs than nothing; a vile inſect, that has riſen up in contempt againſt the majeſty of heaven and earth?

3. Why ſhould God be looked upon obliged to beſtow ſalvation upon you, when you have been ſo ungrateful for the mercies he has beſtowed upon you already? God has tried you with a great deal of kindneſs, and he never has ſincerely been thanked by you for any of it. God has watched over you, and preſerved you, and provided for you, and followed you with mercy all your days; and yet you have continued ſinning againſt him. He has given you food and raiment, but you have improved both in the ſervice of ſin. He has preſerved you while you ſlept; but when you aroſe, it was to return to the old trade of ſinning. God notwithſtanding this ingratitude, has ſtill continued his mercy; but his kindneſs has never won your heart, or brought you to a more grateful behaviour towards him. It may be you have received many remarkable mercies, recoveries from ſickneſs, or preſervations of your life, when at one time and another expoſed by accidents, when if you had died, you would have gone directly to hell: But you never had any true thankful-

neſs

neſs for any of theſe mercies. God has kept you out of hell, and continued your day of grace, and the offers of ſalvation, this ſo long a time; and that, it may be, while you did not regard your own ſalvation ſo much as to go in ſecret and aſk God for it: And now God has greatly added to his mercy to you, by giving you the ſtrivings of his Spirit, whereby *you* have a moſt precious opportunity for your ſalvation in your hands. But what thanks has God received for it? What kind of returns have you made for all this kindneſs? As God has multiplied mercies, ſo have you multiplied provocations.

And yet now are you ready to quarrel for mercy, and to find fault with God, not only that he don't beſtow more mercy, but to contend with him, becauſe he don't beſtow infinite mercy upon you, heaven with all it contains, and even himſelf, for your eternal portion? What *ideas* have you of your ſelf, that you think God is obliged to do ſo much for you, though you treat him never ſo ungratefully for his kindneſs that you have been followed with all the days of your life?

4. You have voluntarily choſen to be with ſatan in his enmity and oppoſition to God, how juſtly therefore might you be with him in his puniſhment! You did not chuſe to be on God's ſide, but rather choſe to ſide with the devil, and have obſtinately continued in it, againſt God's often repeated calls and counſels. You have choſen rather to hearken to ſatan than to God, and would be with him in his work: You have given your ſelf up to him, to be ſubject to his power and government, in oppoſition to God. How juſtly therefore may God *alſo* give you up to him, and leave you in his power, to accompliſh your ruin? Seeing you have yielded your

ſelf

ſelf to his will, to do as he would have you, ſurely God may leave you in his hands to execute his will upon you. If men will be with God's enemy, and on his ſide, why is God obliged to redeem them out of his hands, when they have done his work?— Doubtleſs you would be glad to *ſerve the devil*, and be God's *enemy* while you live, and then to have God your *friend*, and to *deliver you from the devil*, when you come to die: But will God be unjuſt if he deals otherwiſe by you? No ſurely! It will be altogether and perfectly juſt, that you ſhould have your portion with him, with whom you have choſen your work; and that you ſhould be in his poſſeſſion to whoſe dominion you have yielded your ſelf; and if you cry to God for deliverance, he may moſt juſtly give you that anſwer, Judges 10. 14. *Go to the gods which ye have choſen.*

5. Conſider how often you have refuſed to hear God's calls to you, and how juſt it would therefore be, if he ſhould refuſe to hear you when you call upon him. You are ready, it may be, to complain that you have often prayed, and earneſtly begg'd of God to ſhew you mercy, and yet have no anſwer of prayer: One ſays, *I have been conſtant in prayer for ſo many years, and God has not heard me.* Another ſays, *I have done what I can; I have prayed as earneſtly as I am able; I don't ſee how I can do more; and it will ſeem hard if after all I am denied.* But do you conſider how often God has called, yand ou have *denied him?* God has called earneſtly and for a long time; he has call'd, and call'd again, in his word, and in his providence, and you have refuſed. You was not uneaſy for fear you ſhould not ſhow regard enough to his calls. You let him call as loud, and as long as he would; for your part, you had no leaſure

leiſure to attend to what he ſaid; you had other buſineſs to mind; you had theſe and thoſe luſts to gratify and pleaſe, and worldly concerns to attend; you could not afford to ſtand conſidering of what God had to ſay to you. When the miniſters of Chriſt that he ſent on that errand, have ſtood and pleaded with you, in his name, ſabbath after ſabbath, and have even ſpent their ſtrength in it, how little was you moved by it! It did not alter you, but you went on ſtill as you uſed to do; when you went away, you returned again to your ſins, to your laciviouſneſs, to your vain mirth, to your covetouſneſs, to your intemperance, and that has been the language of your heart and practice, Exod. 5. 2. *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his voice?* Was it no crime for you to refuſe to hear when God call'd? And yet is it now very hard that God don't hear your earneſt calls, and that though your calling on God be not from any reſpect to him, but meerly from ſelf-love? The devil would beg as earneſtly as you, if he had any hope to get ſalvation by it, and a thouſand times as earneſtly, and yet be as much of a devil as he is now. Are your calls *more worthy* to be heard than God's? Or is God more obliged to regard what you ſay to him, than you to regard his commands, counſels and invitations to you? What can have more juſtice in it than that, in Prov. 1. 24, &c. *Becauſe I have called, and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have ſet at nought all my counſel, and would none of my reproof: I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear commeth; when your fear cometh as deſolation, and your deſtruction as a whirlwind; when diſtreſs and anguiſh cometh upon you: Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will*

not anſwer, they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me.

6. Have you not taken encouragement to ſin againſt God, on that very preſumption, that God would ſhew you mercy when you ſought it? And may not God juſtly refuſe you that mercy that you have ſo preſumed upon? That has been what you have flattered yourſelf with, and that which has made you bold to diſobey God, *viz.* That though you did ſo, yet God would ſhew you mercy when you cried earneſtly to him for it: How righteous therefore would it be in God to diſappoint ſuch a wicked preſumption? It was upon that very hope, that you dared to affront the majeſty of heaven, ſo dreadfully as you have done; and can you now be ſo ſottiſh as to think that God is obliged not to fruſtrate that hope?

When a ſinner takes encouragement to neglect that ſecret prayer that God has commanded, and to gratify his luſts, and to live a carnal vain life, and thwart God, and run upon him, and contemn him to his face, thinking with himſelf, "If I do ſo, God "won't damn me; he is a merciful God, and there- "fore when I ſeek his mercy he will beſtow it upon "me;" muſt God be accounted hard becauſe he won't do according to ſuch a ſinner's preſumption? Cannot he be excuſed from ſhowing ſuch a ſinner mercy when he is pleaſed to ſeek it, without incurring the charge of being unjuſt? If this be the caſe, God has no liberty to vindicate his own honour and majeſty; but muſt lay himſelf open to all manner of affronts, and yield himſelf up to the abuſes of vile men, and let them diſobey, deſpiſe, and diſhonour him, as much as they will; and when they have done, his mercy and pardoning grace, muſt not be

in

in his own power, and at his own diſpoſal, but he muſt be obliged to diſpenſe it at their call: He muſt take theſe bold and vile contemners of his majeſty, when it ſuits them to aſk it, and muſt forgive all their ſins, and not only ſo, but muſt adopt them into his family, and make them his children, and beſtow eternal glory upon them.—What mean, low, and ſtrange thoughts, have ſuch men of God, as think thus of him?

Conſider that you have injured God the more, and have been the worſe enemy to him, for his being a merciful God. So have you treated that attribute of God's mercy! How juſt is it therefore that you never ſhould have any benefit of that attribute!

There is ſomething peculiarly heinous in ſinning againſt the mercy of God more than other attributes. There is ſuch baſe and horrid ingratitude, in being the worſe to God becauſe he is a Being of infinite goodneſs and grace, that it above all things renders wickedneſs vile and deteſtable. This ought to win us, and engage us to ſerve God better; but inſtead of that, to ſin againſt him the more, has ſomething inexpreſſibly bad in it, and does in a peculiar manner enhance guilt, and incenſe wrath; as ſeems to be intimated in Rom. 2. 4, 5. *Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance: But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

The greater the mercy of God is, the more ſhould you be engaged to love him, and live to his glory. But it has been contrarywiſe with you; the conſideration of the mercies of God being ſo exceeding

great, is the thing wherewith you have encouraged yourſelf in ſin. You have heard that the mercy of God was without bounds, that it was ſufficient to pardon the greateſt ſinner, and you have upon that very account, ventured to be a *very great* ſinner: Though it was very offenſive to God, though you heard that God infinitely hated ſin, and that ſuch practices as you went on in were exceeding contrary to his nature, will, and glory, yet that did not make you uneaſy; you heard that he was a very merciful God, and had grace enough to pardon you, and ſo cared not how offenſive your ſins were to him. How long have ſome of you gone on in ſin, and what great ſins have ſome of you been guilty of, on that preſumption! Your own conſcience can give teſtimony to it, that this has made you refuſe God's calls, and has made you regardleſs of his repeated commands. Now, how righteous would it be if God ſhould ſwear in his wrath, that you ſhould never be the better for his being infinitely merciful!

Your ingratitude has been the greater, that you have not only abuſed the attribute of God's mercy, taking encouragement from it to continue in ſin, but you have thus abuſed this mercy, under that very notion of it's being exerciſed *towards you*, in a ſuppoſition that God would exerciſe infinite mercy to you *in particular*; which conſideration ſhould have eſpecially endeared God to you.—You have taken encouragement to ſin the more, from that conſideration that Chriſt came into the world and died to ſave ſinners: *What thanks* has Chriſt had from you, for enduring ſuch a tormenting death for his enemies! Now, how juſtly might it be ſo, that God ſhould refuſe that you ſhould ever be the better for his Son's laying down his life!—It was becauſe of

theſe

theſe things that you put off ſeeking ſalvation : You *would* take the pleaſures of ſin ſtill longer, hardening yourſelf with that, that mercy was infinite, and it would not be too late, if you ſought afterwards ; Now, how juſtly may God diſappoint you in this, and order it ſo that it *ſhall be too late !*

7. How have ſome of you riſen up againſt God, and in the frame of your minds oppoſed him in his ſovereign diſpenſations ! And how juſtly upon that account, might God oppoſe you, and ſet himſelf againſt you ! You never yet would ſubmit to God ; never could willingly comply with it that God ſhould have dominion over the world, and that he ſhould govern it for his own glory, according to his own wiſdom. You a poor worm, a potſherd, a broken piece of an earthen veſſel, have dared to find fault, and quarrel with God. Iſai. 45. 9. *Wo to him that ſtrives with his maker. Let the potſherd ſtrive with the potſherds of the earth : Shall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, what makeſt thou ?* But yet you have ventured to do it. Rom. 9. 20. *Who art thou, O man, that replieſt againſt God ?* But yet you have thought you was *big enough* ; you have taken upon you to call God to an account, why he does thus and thus ; you have ſaid to Jehovah, *What doſt thou ?*

If you have been reſtrain'd by fear from openly venting your oppoſition, and enmity of heart againſt God's government, yet it has been in you ; you have not been quiet in the frame of your mind ; you have had the heart of a viper within, and have been ready to ſpit venom at God : And 'tis well if ſometimes you have not actually done it, by tolerating blaſphemous thoughts, and malignant riſings of heart againſt him ; yea, and the frame of your heart in

ſome

ſome meaſure appeared. in an impatient and fretful behaviour.

Now, ſeeing you have thus oppoſed God, how juſt is it God ſhould oppoſe you! Or, is it becauſe you are ſo much better, and ſo much greater than God, that it is a crime for God to make that oppoſition againſt you, that you do againſt him? Do you think you ought to appropriate the liberty of making oppoſition to yourſelf, as being your prerogative, ſo that you may be an enemy to God, but God muſt by no means be an enemy to you, but muſt be looked upon under obligation nevertheleſs to help you and ſave you by his blood, and beſtow his beſt bleſſings upon you?

Conſider how in the frame of your mind, you have thwarted God, in thoſe very exerciſes of mercy towards others, that you are ſeeking for yourſelf. God's exerciſing his infinite grace towards your neighbour, has put you into an ill frame, and it may be ſet you into a meer tumult of mind: How juſtly therefore may God refuſe ever to exerciſe that mercy towards you! Have you not thus oppoſed God's ſhewing mercy to others, even at the very time when you pretended to be earneſt with God for pity and help for yourſelf? Yea, and while you was endeavouring to get ſomething wherewith to recommend yourſelf to God? And will you look to God ſtill with a challenge of mercy, and contend with him for it notwithſtanding? Can you who have ſuch an heart, and have thus behaved yourſelf, come to God for any other than meer ſovereign mercy?

II. If you ſhould be forever caſt off by God, it would be agreable to your treatment of Jeſus Chriſt, It would have been juſt with God if he had caſt you off forever, without ever making you the offer of a

Saviour,

Saviour. But God hath not done that; but has provided a ſaviour for ſinners, and offered him to you, even his own ſon Jeſus Chriſt; who is the only Saviour of men; all that be not forever caſt off, are ſaved by him: God offers men ſalvation through him, and has promiſed us that if we come to him we ſhall not be caſt off. But you have treated, and ſtill treat this Saviour after ſuch a manner, that if you ſhould be eternally caſt off by God, it would be moſt agreable to your behaviour towards him; which appears by this, *viz.*

That you reject Chriſt and won't have him for your Saviour.

If God offers you a Saviour from deſerved puniſhment, and you will not receive him, then ſurely 'tis juſt that you ſhould go without a Saviour. Or, is God obliged, becauſe you don't like this Saviour, to provide you another? If when he has given an infinitely honourable and glorious perſon, even his only begotton ſon, to be a ſacrifice for ſin, in the fire of his wrath, and ſo provided ſalvation, and this Saviour is offered to you, you be not ſuited in him, and refuſe to accept of him, is God therefore unjuſt if he don't ſave you? Is he obliged to ſave you in a way of your own chuſing, becauſe you don't like the way of his chuſing? Or will you charge Chriſt with injuſtice becauſe he don't become your Saviour, when at the ſame time you won't have him, when he offers himſelf to you, and beſeeches you to accept of him as your Saviour?

I am ſenſible that by this time, many perſons are ready to open their mouths in objection againſt this: If all ſhould ſpeak what they now think, we ſhould hear a murming all over the meeting-houſe, and one and another would ſay, 'I can't ſee how this can

'be,

" be, that I be not willing that Chriſt ſhould be my " Savior, when I would give all the world that he " was my Savior: How is it poſſible that I ſhould " not be willing to have Chriſt for my Savior, when " this is what I am ſeeking after, and praying for, " and ſtriving for, as for my life" ?

Here therefore I would endeavour to convince you that you are under a groſs miſtake in this matter. And 1. I would endeavour to ſhew the weakneſs of the grounds of your miſtake. And, 2. To demonſtrate to you, that you have rejected, and do wilfully reject Jeſus Chriſt.

1. That you may ſee the weakneſs of the grounds of your miſtake, conſider,

1. There is a great deal of difference between a willingneſs not to be damned, and a being willing to receive Chriſt for your Savior. You have the former; there is no doubt to be made of that; no body ſuppoſes that you love miſery ſo well, as to chuſe an eternity of it: And ſo doubtleſs you are willing to be ſaved from eternal miſery. But that is a very different thing from being willing to come to Chriſt: Perſons very commonly miſtake the one for the other, but they are quite two things: You may love the deliverance, but hate the deliverer. You tell of a willingneſs: but conſider what is the object of that willingneſs: It don't reſpect Chriſt; the way of ſalvation by him is not at all the object of it; but 'tis wholly terminated on your eſcape from miſery: The inclination of your will goes no further than *ſelf*, it never reaches Chriſt. You are willing not to be miſerable; that is you love yourſelf; and there your will and choice terminates: And 'tis but a vain pretence, and deluſion, to ſay or think that you are willing to accept of Chriſt.

2. There

2. There is certainly a great deal of difference between a forced compliance, and a free willingneſs. Force and freedom can't conſiſt together. Now that willingneſs that you tell of, whereby you think you are willing to have Chriſt for a Saviour, is meerly a forced thing. Your heart does not go out after Chriſt of itſelf; but you are forced and driven to ſeek an intereſt in him. Chriſt has no ſhare at all in your heart; there is no manner of cloſing of the heart with him. This forced compliance is not what Chriſt ſeeks of you; he ſeeks a free and willing acceptance, Pſalm 110. 3. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power.* He ſeeks not that you ſhould receive him againſt your will, but with a free will: He ſeeks entertainment in your heart and choice. And,

If you refuſe thus to receive Chriſt, how juſt is it that Chriſt ſhould refuſe to receive you! How reaſonable are Chriſt's terms, who offers to ſave all thoſe that willingly, or with a good will, accept of him for their Saviour! who can rationally expect that Chriſt ſhould force himſelf upon any man, to be his Saviour? Or what can be looked for more reaſonable, than thatall that would be ſaved by Chriſt, ſhould heartily andfreely entertain him? And ſurely ti would be very diſhonorable for Chriſt to offer himſelf upon lower terms.

But I would now proceed,

2. To ſhew that 'tis really ſo that you are not willing to have Chriſt for a Saviour. To convince you of it, conſider,

1. How it is poſſible that you ſhould be willing to accept of Chriſt as a Savior from the deſert of a puniſhment, that you are not ſenſible you have deſerved. If you are truly willing to accept of

Chriſt as a Saviour, it muſt be as a ſacrifice to make atonement for your guilt: Chriſt came into the world on this errand, to offer himſelf as an atonement, to anſwer for our deſert of puniſhment. But how is it poſſible that you ſhould be willing to accept of Chriſt, as an atonement for that guilt that you be not ſenſible that you have? How can you be willing to have Chriſt for a Savior from a deſert of hell, if you be not ſenſible that you have a deſert of hell? If you have not really deſerved everlaſting burnings in hell, then the very offer of an atonment for ſuch a deſert is an impoſition upon you. If you have no ſuch guilt upon you, then the very offer of a ſatisfaction for that guilt is an injury, becauſe it implies in it a charge of guilt that you are free from. Now therefore 'tis impoſſible that a man that is not convinced of his guilt, can be willing to accept of an offer; becauſe he can't be willing to accept the charge that the offer implies: That he looks upon as injurious. A man that is not convinced that he has deſerved ſo dreadful a puniſhment, can't willingly ſubmit to be charged with it; if he thinks he is willing, it is but a meer forced, feigned buſineſs; becauſe in his heart he looks upon himſelf greatly injured: And therefore he can't freely accept of Chriſt, under that notion, of a Saviour from that guilt, and from the deſert of ſuch a puniſhment; for ſuch an acceptance is an implicit owning that he does deſerve ſuch a puniſhment.

I don't ſay, but that men may be willing to be ſaved from an undeſerved puniſhment; they may rather not ſuffer it than ſuffer it: But a man can't be willing to accept one at God's hands, under the notion of aSaviour from a puniſhment deſerved from him, that he thinks he has not deſerved; 'tis impoſſible

poſſible that any one ſhould freely allow a Saviour under that notion. Such an one can't like the way of ſalvation by Chriſt; for if he thinks he has not deſerved hell, then he will think that freedom from hell is a debt; and therefore can't wilingly and heartily receive it as a free gift.—If a king ſhould condemn a man to ſome exceeding tormenting death, which the condemned perſon thought himſelf not deſerving off, looked upon the ſentence unjuſt and cruel, and the king, when the time of execution drew nigh, ſhould offer him his pardon, under the notion of a very great act of grace and clemency, the condemned perſon never could willingly and heartily allow it under that notion, becauſe he judged himſelf unjuſtly condemned.

Now by this it is evident that you are not willing to accept of Chriſt as your Saviour; becauſe you never had ſuch a ſenſe of your own ſinfulneſs, and ſuch a conviction of your great guilt in God's ſight, as to be indeed convinced that you lay juſtly condemned to the puniſhment of hell. You never was convinced that you had forfeited all favour, and was in God's hands, and at his ſovereign and arbitrary diſpoſal, to be either deſtroyed or ſaved, juſt as he pleaſed. You never yet was convinced of the ſovereignty of God. Hence are there ſo many objections ariſing againſt the juſtice of your puniſhment, from original ſin, and from God's decrees, from mercy ſhown to others and the like.

2. That you be not ſincerely willing to accept of Chriſt as your Saviour, appears by this, that you never have been convinced that he is ſufficient for the work of your ſalvation. You never had a ſight or ſenſe of any ſuch excellency or worthineſs in Chriſt, as ſhould give ſuch great value to his blood

and his mediation with God, as that it was ſufficient to be accepted for ſuch exceeding guilty creatures, and thoſe that have ſo provoked God, and expoſed themſelves to ſuch amazing wrath. A ſaying it is ſo, and a cuſtomary yielding and allowing it to be as others ſay, is a very different thing from being really convinced of it, and a being made ſenſible of it in your own heart. The ſufficiency of Chriſt depends upon, or rather conſiſts in his excellency. It is becauſe he is ſo excellent a perſon, that his blood is of ſufficient value to atone for ſin, and 'tis hence that his obedience is ſo worthy in God's ſight; 'tis alſo hence that his interceſſion is ſo prevalent; and therefore thoſe that never had any ſpiritual ſight or ſenſe of Chriſt's excellency, can't be ſenſible of his ſufficiency.

And that ſinners be not convinced that Chriſt is ſufficient for the work he has undertaken, appears moſt manifeſtly when they are under great convictions of their ſin, and danger of God's wrath. Though it may be before they thought they could allow Chriſt to be ſufficient (for it is eaſy to allow any one to be ſufficient for our defence, at a time when we ſee no danger,) yet when they come to be ſenſible of their guilt, and God's wrath, what diſcouraging thoughts do they entertain! How are they ready to draw towards deſpair, as if there was no hope or help for ſuch wicked creatures as they! The reaſon is, they have no apprehenſion or ſenſe of any other way that God's majeſty can be vindicated, but only in their miſery: To tell them of the blood of Chriſt, ſignifies nothing, it don't relieve their ſinking deſpairing hearts. This makes it moſt evident that they are not convinced that Chriſt is ſufficient to be their mediator.

And

And as long as they are unconvinced of this, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be willing to accept of him as *their mediator* and Saviour. A man in diſtreſſing fear won't willingly betake himſelf to a fort that he judges not ſufficient to defend him from the enemy: A man won't willingly venture out into the ocean, in a ſhip that he ſuſpects is leaky, and will ſink before he gets through his voyage.

3. 'Tis evident that you are not willing to have Chriſt for your ſaviour, becauſe you have ſo mean an opinion of him, that you durſt not truſt his faithfulneſs. One that undertakes to be the ſaviour of ſouls had need be faithful; for if he fails in ſuch a truſt, how great is the loſs! But you are not convinced of Chriſt's faithfulneſs; as is evident, becauſe at ſuch times as when you are in a conſiderable meaſure ſenſible of your guilt and God's anger, you can't be convinced that Chriſt is willing to accept of you, or that he ſtands ready to receive you if you ſhould come to him, though Chriſt ſo much invites you to come to him, and has ſo fully declared that he won't reject you, if you do come; as particularly, John 6. 37. *He that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Now, there is no man can be heartily willing to truſt his eternal welfare in the hands of an unfaithful perſon, or one whoſe faithfulneſs he ſuſpects.

4. You are not willing to be ſaved in that way by Chriſt, as is evident, becauſe you are not willing that your own goodneſs ſhould be ſet at nought. In the way of ſalvation by Chriſt men's own goodneſs is wholly ſet at nought, there is no account at all made of it. Now you can't be willing to be ſaved in a way wherein your own goodneſs is ſet at nought, as is evident by that, that you make much of it yourſelf. You make much of your prayers and pains in religion,

religion, and are often thinking of them; how conſiderable do they appear to you, when you look back upon them! And how much are ſome of you in thinking how much more you have done than ſome others, and in expecting ſome reſpect or regard that God ſhould manifeſt to what you do? Now, if you make ſo much of what you do yourſelf, 'tis impoſſible that you ſhould be freely willing that God ſhould make nothing of it. As we may ſee in other things; if a man is proud of a great eſtate, or if he values himſelf much upon his honorable office, or his great abilities, 'tis impoſſible that he ſhould like it, and heartily approve of it, that others ſhould make light of theſe things, and deſpiſe them.

Seeing therefore that 'tis ſo evident that you refuſe to accept of Chriſt as your ſaviour, why is Chriſt to be blamed that he don't ſave you? Chriſt has offered himſelf to you to be your ſaviour in time paſt, and he continues offering himſelf ſtill, and you continee to reject him, and yet complain that he don't ſave you. So ſtrangely unreaſonable, and inconſiſtent with themſelves, are goſpel ſinners!

But I expect that there are many of you, that in your hearts ſtill object; your mouths be not ſtopp'd. Such an objection as this, is probably now in the hearts of many here preſent.

Object. If it be ſo, that I am not willing to have Chriſt for my ſaviour, yet I can't make myſelf willing.

But I would give an anſwer to this objection, by laying down two things, that muſt be acknowledged to be exceeding evident.

1. 'Tis no excuſe that you can't receive Chriſt of yourſelf, unleſs you would if you could. This is ſo evident of itſelf, that it ſcarce needs any proof. Certainly if perſons would not if they could, it is juſt

the

the ſame thing as to the blame that lies upon them whether they can or cannot. If you were willing, and then found that you could not, your being unable would alter the caſe, and might be ſome excuſe; becauſe then the defect would not be in your will, but only in your ability: But as long as you will not, it is no matter what the ability is, whether you have ability or no ability.

If you be not willing to accept of Chriſt, it will follow that you have no ſincere willingneſs to be willing; becauſe the will always neceſſarily approves of, and reſts in it's own acts. To ſuppoſe the contrary would be to ſuppoſe a contradiction; it would be to ſuppoſe that a man's will is contrary to itſelf, or that he wills contrary to what he himſelf wills. So that as you are not willing to come to Chriſt, and can't make yourſelf willing, ſo you have no ſincere deſire to be willing; and therefore may moſt juſtly periſh without a ſaviour. There is no excuſe at all for you; for ſay what you will about your inability, the ſeat of your blame lies in your perverſe will, that is an enemy to the ſaviour. 'Tis in vain for you to tell of your want of power, as long as your will is found defective. If a man ſhould hate you and devour, and exalt himſelf, and ſmite you in the face, and tell you that he did it voluntarily, and becauſe he had a mind to, but only ſhould tell you at the ſame time, that he hated you ſo much that he could not help chuſing and and willing ſo to do, would you take it the more patiently for that? Would not your indignation be rather ſtirr'd up the more?

2. If you would be willing if you could, that is no excuſe, unleſs your willingneſs to be willing be ſincere. That which is hypocritical, and don't come from the heart, but is meerly forced, ought wholly to

to be ſet aſide, as worthy of no conſideration, and that becauſe common ſenſe teaches that that which is not hearty but hypocritical is indeed nothing, being only a ſhew of what is not; but that which is good for nothing, ought to go for nothing. But if you ſet aſide all that is not free, and call nothing a willingneſs, but a free hearty willingneſs, then ſee how the caſe ſtands, and whether or no you have not loſt all your excuſe for ſtanding out againſt the calls of the goſpel. You ſay you would make yourſelf willing to accept if you could; but 'tis not from any good principle that you are willing for that; 'tis not from any free inclination, or true reſpect to Chriſt, or any love to your duty, or any ſpirit of obedience, or from the influence of any manner of real reſpect, or tendency in your heart towards any thing that is good, or from any other principle than ſuch as is in the hearts of devils, and would make them have the ſame ſort of willingneſs in the ſame circumſtances. It is therefore evident that there can be no goodneſs in that *would-ing to be willing* to come to Chriſt: And that which has no goodneſs, can't be an excuſe for any badneſs. If there be no good in it, then it ſignifies nothing and weighs nothing, when put into the ſcales to counterbalance that which is bad.

Sinners therefore ſpend their time in fooliſh arguing and objecting, making much of that which is good for nothing, making thoſe excuſes that be not worth offering.—'Tis in vain to keep making objections: You ſtand juſtly condemned: The blame lies all at your door: Thruſt it off from you as often as you will, it will return upon you: Sew fig-leaves as long as you will your nakedneſs will appear: You continue wilfully and wickedly rejecting Jeſus Chriſt, and won't have him for your ſavior, and therefore

therefore 'tis ſottiſh madneſs in you to charge Chriſt with injuſtice that he don't ſave you.

Here is the ſin of unbelief! Thus the guilt of that great ſin lies upon you! If you had never thus treated a ſaviour, you might moſt juſtly have been damned to all eternity: It would but be exactly agreeable to to your treatment of God. But beſides this, when God notwithſtanding, has offered you his own dear ſon to ſave you from this endleſs miſery you had deſerved, and not only ſo, but to make you happy eternally in the enjoyment of himſelf, you refuſed him, and would not have him for your ſaviour, and ſtill refuſe to comply with the offers of the goſpel; what can render any perſon more inexcuſeable? If you ſhould now periſh forever, what can you have to ſay?

Hereby the juſtice of God in you deſtruction appears in two reſpects,

1. It is more abundantly manifeſt *that it is juſt that you ſhould be deſtroyed.* Juſtice never appears ſo conſpicuous as it does after refuſed and abuſed mercy. Juſtice in *damnation* appears abundantly the more clear and bright, after a wilful rejection of offered *ſalvation.* What can an offended prince do more than freely offer pardon to a condemned malefactor? And if he refuſes to accept of it, will any one ſay that his execution is unjuſt?

2. *God's Juſtice* will appear *in your greater deſtruction.* Beſides the guilt that you would have had if a ſaviour never had been offered, you bring that great additional guilt upon you, of moſt ungratefully refuſing offered deliverance. What more baſe and vile treatment of God can there be, than for you, when juſtly condemned to eternal miſery, and ready to be executed and, God graciouſly ſends

his own ſon, who comes and knocks at your door with a pardon in his hand, and not only a pardon, but a deed of eternal glory; I ſay what can be worſe, then for you out of diſlike, and enmity againſt God, and his ſon, to refuſe to accept thoſe benefits at his hands! How juſtly may the anger of God be greatly incenſed and increaſed by it! When a ſinner thus ungratefully rejects mercy, his laſt error is worſe than the firſt; this is more heinous than all his former rebellion, and may juſtly bring down more fearful wrath upon him. The heinouſneſs of this ſin of rejecting a ſaviour eſpecially appears in two things.

1. The greatneſs of the benefits offered; which appears in the greatneſs of the deliverance, which is from inexpreſſible degrees of *corruption* and *wickedneſs* of heart and life, the leaſt degree of which is infinitely evil; and from miſery that is everlaſting; and in the greatneſs and glory of the inheritance purchaſed and offered, Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?*

2. The wonderfulneſs of the way in which theſe benefits are procured and offered. That God ſhould lay help on his own ſon, when our caſe was ſo deplorable that help could be had in no meer creature; and that he ſhould undertake for us, and ſhould come into the world, and take upon him our nature, and ſhould not only appear in a low ſtate of life, but ſhould die ſuch a death, and endure ſuch torments and contempt for ſinners while enemies, how wonderful is it! And what tongue or pen can ſet forth the greatneſs of the ingratitude, baſeneſs and perverſneſs that there is in it, when a periſhing ſinner that is in the moſt extreme neceſſity of ſalvation, rejects it, after it is procured in ſuch a way

way as this! That ſo glorious a perſon ſhould be thus treated, and that when he comes on ſo gracious an errand! That he ſhould ſtand ſo long offering himſelf and calling and inviting, as he has done to many of you, and all to no purpoſe, but all the while be ſet at nought!—Surely you might juſtly be caſt into hell without one more offer of a ſaviour! Yea, and thruſt down into the loweſt hell! Herein you have exceeded the very devils; for they never rejected the offers of ſuch *glorious mercy*; no, nor of *any mercy* at all. This will be the diſtinguiſhing condemnation of goſpel ſinners, John 3. 18. *He that hath not believed is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotton ſon of God.*

That outward ſmoothneſs of your carriage towards Chriſt, that appearance of reſpect to him in your looks, your ſpeeches and geſtures, don't argue but that you ſet him at nought in your heart. There may be much of theſe outward ſhews of reſpect, and yet you be like *Judas* that betrayed the ſon of man with a kiſs; and like thoſe mockers that bowed the knee before him, and at the ſame time ſpit in his face.

III. If God ſhould forever caſt you off and deſtroy you, it would be *agreeable to your treatment of others:* It would be no other than what would be exactly anſwerable to your behaviour towards your fellow creatures, that have the ſame humane nature, and are naturally in the ſame circumſtances with you, and that you ought to love as yourſelf. And that appears eſpecially in two things.

1. You have many of you been *oppoſite* in your ſpirit *to the ſalvation of others.* There are ſeveral ways that natural men manifeſt a ſpirit of oppoſition

againſt the ſalvation of others ſouls. It ſometimes appears by a fear that their companions, acquaintance, and equals will obtain mercy, and ſo become unſpeakably happier than they. It is ſometimes manifeſted by an uneaſineſs at the news of others having hopefully obtained. It appears when perſons envy others for it, and diſlike them the more, and diſreliſh their talk, and avoid their company, and can't bear to hear their religious diſcourſe, and eſpecially to receive warnings and counſels from them. And it oftentimes appears by their backwardneſs to entertain charitable thoughts of them, and their being difficultly brought to believe that it is really ſo, that they have obtained mercy, and a forwardneſs to liſten to any thing that ſeems to contradict it. The devil hated to own *Job*'s ſincerity, *Job* 1. 7, *&c.* And *Chap.* 2. *Verſes* 3, 4, 5. There appears very often much of this ſpirit of the devil in natural men. Somtimes they are ready to make a ridicule of others pretended godlineſs: They ſpeak of the ground of others hopes, as the enemies of the *Jews* did of the wall that they built. Neh. 4. 3. *Now* Tobiah *the* Ammonite *was by him, and he ſaid, that which they build, if a fox go up he ſhall even break down their ſtone wall.* There are many that join with *Sanballat* and *Tobiah*, and are of the ſame ſpirit with them. There always was, and always will be, an enmity betwixt the ſeed of the ſerpent, and the ſeed of the woman. It appeared in *Cain* who hated his brother, becauſe he was more acceptable to God than himſelf; and it appears ſtill in theſe times, and in this place. There are *many* that are like the elder brother, who could not bear it that the prodigal when he returned ſhould be received with ſuch joy and good entertainment,

ment, and was put into a fret by it, both againſt his brother that had returned, and his father that made him ſo welcome. *Luke* 15.

Thus have many of you been oppoſite to the ſalvation of others, that ſtand in as great neceſſity of it as you. You have been againſt their being delivered from everlaſting miſery, that can bear it no better than you; not becauſe their ſalvation would do you any hurt, or their damnation help you, any otherwiſe than as it would gratify that vile ſpirit that is ſo much like the ſpirit of the devil, who, becauſe he is miſerable himſelf, is unwilling that others ſhould be happy. How juſt therefore is it that God ſhould be oppoſite to your ſalvation! If you have ſo little love or mercy in you, as to begrudge your neighbours ſalvation, whom you have no cauſe to hate, but the law of God and nature requires you to love, why is God bound to exerciſe ſuch infinite love and mercy to you, as to ſave you at the price of his own blood, that he is no way bound to love, but that have deſerved his hatred a thouſand and a thouſand times? You are not willing that others ſhould be converted, that have behaved themſelves injuriouſly towards you; and yet will you count it hard if God don't beſtow converting grace upon you, that have deſerved ten thouſand times as ill of God, as ever any of your neigbours have of you? You are oppoſite to God's ſhewing mercy to theſe and thoſe, that you think have been vicious perſons, and are very unworthy of ſuch mercy.—Is others unworthineſs a juſt reaſon why God ſhould not beſtow mercy on them? And yet will God be hard, if notwithſtanding all your unworthineſs, and the abominableneſs of your ſpirit and practice in his ſight, he don't ſhow *you* mercy? You would have God beſtow liberally

on

on you, and upbraid not; but yet when he ſhews mercy to others, you are ready to upbraid, as ſoon as you hear of it; you immediately are thinking with yourſelf how ill they have behaved themſelves; and it may be your mouths on this occaſion are open, enumerating and aggravating the ſins they have been guilty of.—You would have God bury all your faults, and wholly blot out all your tranſgreſſions; but yet if he beſtows mercy on others, it may be you will take that occaſion to take up all their old faults that you can think of.—You don't much reflect on and condemn yourſelf, for your baſeneſs and unjuſt ſpirit towards others, in your oppoſition to their ſalvation; you don't quarrel with yourſelf, and condemn yourſelf for this; but yet you in your heart will quarrel with God, and condemn him, and fret at his diſpenſations, becauſe you think he ſeems oppoſite to ſhewing mercy to you.—One would think that the conſideration of theſe things ſhould forever ſtop your mouth.

2. Conſider how you have *promoted others damnation.* Many of you by the bad examples you have ſet, by corrupting the minds of others, by your ſinful converſation, by leading them into ſin, or ſtrengthening them in ſin, and by the miſchief that you have done in humane ſociety other ways that might be mentioned, have been guilty of thoſe things that have tended to others damnation. You have heretofore appeared on the ſide of ſin and ſatan, and have behaved yourſelf ſo as much to ſtrengthen their intereſt, and have been many ways acceſſary to others ſins, have harden'd others hearts, and thereby have done what has tended to the ruin of their ſouls.

And without doubt there are thoſe here preſent, that have been in a great meaſure the means of others

damnation,

damnation. Though it is true that it is determined of God who he will ſave, and who not, from all eternity, yet one man may really be a means of others damnation, as well as ſalvation. Chriſt charges the *ſcribes* and *phariſees* with this, Mat. 23. 13. *Ye ſhut up the kiugdom of heaven againſt men; for ye neither go in your ſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entring to go in.* We have no reaſon to think that this congregation has none in it, that are curſed from day to day, by poor ſouls that are roaring out in hell, whoſe damnation they have been a means of, or have greatly contributed to.

There are many that contribute to their own childrens damnation, by neglecting their education and ſetting them bad examples, and bringing them up in ſinful ways: They take ſome care of their bodies, but take but little care of their poor ſouls; they provide for them bread to eat, but deny them the bread of life that their famiſhing ſouls ſtand in need of. And are there no ſuch parents here that have thus treated their Children? If their children be not gone to hell, 'tis no thank to them; 'tis not becauſe they have not done what has tended to their deſtruction. Seeing therefore you have had no more regard to others ſalvation, and have promoted their damnation, how juſtly might God leave you to periſh yourſelf?

IV. If God ſhould eternally caſt you off, it would but be *agreable to yonr own behavior towards your ſelf.* And that in two reſpects;

1. In being ſo *careleſs of your own ſalvation.* You have refuſed to take care for your ſalvation, as God has counſell'd and commanded you, from time to time; and why may not God neglect it, now you *ſeek it of him?* Is God obliged to be more careful of your happineſs, than you are, either of your own happineſs,

happineſs, or his glory? Is God bound to take that care for you, out of love to you, that you won't take for yourſelf, either from love to yourſelf, or regard to his authority? How long, and how greatly, have you neglected the welfare of your precious ſoul, refuſing to take pains and deny yourſelf, or put yourſelf a little out of your way for your ſalvation, while God has been calling upon you! Neither your duty to God, nor love to your own ſoul, were enough to induce you to do little things for your own eternal welfare; and yet do you now expect that God ſhould do great things, putting forth almighty power, and exerciſing infinite mercy for it? You was urged to take care for your ſalvation, and not to put it off: You was told that that was the beſt time, before you grew older, and that it might be, if you would put it off, God would not hear you afterwards; but yet you would not hearken; you would run the venture of it. Now how juſtly might God order it ſo, that it ſhould be two late, leaving you to ſeek in vain! You was told that you would repent of it, if you delayed; but you would not hear: How juſtly therefore may God give you cauſe to repent of it, by refuſing to ſhow you mercy now! If God ſees you going on in ways contrary to his commands, and his glory, and requires you to forſake them, and tells you that they are ways that tend to the deſtruction of your own ſoul, and therefore counſels you to avoid them, and you refuſe, how juſt would it be if God ſhould be provoked by it, henceforward to be as careleſs of the good of your ſoul as you are yourſelf!

2. You have not only neglected your ſalvation, but you *have wilfully taken direct courſes to undo yourſelf.* You have gone on in thoſe ways and practices that have directly tended to your damnation, and have

have been perverse and obstinate in it.—You can't plead ignorance; you had all the light set before you that you could desire; God told you that you was *undoing* yourself; but yet you would do it: He told you that the path you was going in led to destruction, and counsell'd you to avoid it; but you would not hearken: How justly therefore may God leave you to be *undone!* You have obstinately persisted to travel in the way that leads to hell for a long time, contrary to God's continual counsels and commands, 'till it may be at length you are got almost to your journey's end, and are come near to hell's gate, and so begin to be sensible of your danger and misery; and now account it unjust and hard, if God won't deliver you! You have destroyed yourself, and destroyed yourself *wilfully*, contrary to God's repeated counsels, yea, and destroyed yourself *in fighting against God*: Now therefore why do you blame any but yourself, if you are destroyed? If you will undo yourself in opposing God, and while God opposes you by his calls and counsels, and, it may be too, by the convictions of his spirit, what can you object against it, if God now leaves you to be undone? You would have your own way, and did not like that God should oppose you in it, and your way was to ruin your own soul: How just therefore is it, if now at length, God ceases to oppose you, and falls in with you, and lets your soul be ruin'd, and as you would destroy yourself, so should put to his hand to destroy you too! The ways you went on in had a natural tendency to your misery: If you would drink poison, in opposition to God, and in contempt of him and his advice, who can you blame but yourself if you are poison'd, and so perish? If you would run into the fire against all restraints both of God's mercy and authority, you must e'en blame yourself if you are burnt.

Thus I have propoſed ſome things to your conſideration, which if you are not exceeding blind, ſenſeleſs, and perverſe, will ſtop your mouth, and convince you that you ſtand juſtly condemned before God, and that he would in no wiſe deal hardly with you, but altogether juſtly, in denying you any mercy, and in refuſing to hear your prayers, let you pray never ſo earneſtly, and never ſo often, and continue in it never ſo long; and that God may utterly diſregard your tears and moans, your heavy heart, your earneſt deſires, and great endeavours, and that he may caſt you into eternal deſtruction, without any regard to your welfare, denying you converting grace, and giving you over to ſatan, and at laſt caſt you into the lake that burns with fire and brimſtone, to be there to eternity, having no reſt day nor night, forever glorifying his juſtice upon you, in the preſence of the holy angels, and the preſence of the Lamb.

Object. But here many may ſtill object, (for I am ſenſible 'tis an hard thing to ſtop ſinners mouths,) "God ſhews mercy to others that have done theſe "things as well as I, yea, that have done a great "deal worſe than I."

Anſ. 1. That does not prove that God is any way bound to ſhew mercy to you, or them either. If God does beſtow it on others, he don't beſtow it *on them* becauſe he is bound to beſtow it: He might if he had pleaſed, with glorious juſtice have denied it them. If God beſtows it *on ſome*, that does not prove that he is bound to beſtow it *on any*; and if he is bound to beſtow it on *none*, then he is not bound to beſtow it on *you*. God is in debt to none, and if he gives to ſome that he is not in debt to, becauſe 'tis his pleaſure, that don't bring him into debt to others.—It alters not the caſe as to you, at all, whether others have it or have it not: You don't deſerve

damnation

damnation the leſs, than if mercy never had been beſtowed on any at all. Mat. 20. 15. *Is thine eye evil, becauſe mine is good?*

2. If this objection be good, then the exerciſe of God's mercy is not in his own right, and his grace is not his own to give. That which God may not diſpoſe of as he pleaſes, is not his own; for that which is ones own, is at his own diſpoſal: but if it be not God's own, then he is not capable of making a gift or preſent of it to any one; it is impoſſible to give a debt.

What is it that you would make of God? Muſt the great God be tied up to that, that he muſt not uſe his own pleaſure in beſtowing his own gifts, but if he beſtows them on one, muſt be looked upon obliged to beſtow them on another? Is not God worthy to have the ſame right, with reſpect to the gifts of his grace, that a man has to his money or goods? Is it becauſe God is not ſo great, and ſhould be more in ſubjection than man, that this can't be allowed him? If any of you ſee cauſe to ſhew kindneſs to a neighbour, do all the reſt of your neighbours come to you, and tell you that you owe them ſo much as you have given to ſuch a man? But this is the way that you deal with God; as though God were not worthy to have as abſolute a property in his goods, as you have in your's!

At this rate God can't make a preſent of any thing; he has nothing of his own to beſtow; if he has a mind to ſhew peculiar favour to ſome, or to lay ſome particular perſons under peculiar obligations to him, he can't do it; becauſe he has no ſpecial gift, that his creatures ſtand in great need of, and that would tend greatly to their happineſs, at his own diſpoſe.—If this be the caſe, why do you pray to God to beſtow ſaving grace upon you? If God don't do fairly to deny it you, becauſe he beſtows it

on others, then 'tis not worth your while to pray for it, but you may go and tell him that he has beſtowed it on theſe and thoſe, as bad or worſe than you, and ſo demand it of him as a debt.—And at this rate perſons never need to thank God for ſalvation, when it is beſtowed; for what occaſion is there to thank God for that which was not at his own diſpoſal, and that he could not fairly have denied.—The thing at bottom is, that men have low thoughts of God, and high thoughts of themſelves; and therefore it is that they look upon God as having ſo little right, and they ſo much. Mat. 20. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*

3. God may juſtly ſhew greater reſpect to others than to you, for you have ſhown greater reſpect to others than to God. You have ſhown greater reſpect to *men* than to God: You have rather choſen to offend God than offend men. God only ſhews a greater reſpect to others that are by nature your equals, than to you; but you have ſhown a greater reſpect to thoſe that are infinitely inferiour to God, than to him. You have ſhown a greater regard to wicked men than to God; you have honoured them more, loved them better, and adhered to them rather than to him. Yea, you have honoured the *devil*, in many reſpects, more than God; you have choſen his will, and his intereſt, rather than God's will, and his glory. You have choſen a little *worldly pelf*, rather than God: You have ſet more by a *vile luſt*, than by him. You have choſen theſe things, and rejected God: You have ſet your heart on theſe things, and caſt God behind your back: And where is the injuſtice if God is pleaſed to ſhew greater reſpect to others than to you, or if he chooſes others and rejects you? You have ſhown great reſpect to vile and worthleſs things, and no reſpect to God's glory; and why may not God ſet his

love

love on others, and have no reſpect to your happineſs? You have ſhown great reſpect to others, and not to God, that you are laid under infinite obligations to reſpect above all; and why may not God ſhew reſpect to others, and not to you, that never have laid him under the leaſt obligation?

And will you not be aſhamed, notwithſtanding all theſe things, ſtill to open your mouth, to object and cavil about the decrees of God, and other things that you can't fully underſtand.—Let the decrees of God be what they will, that alters not the caſe as to your liberty, any more than if God had only foreknown.—And why is God to blame for decreeing things? How unbecoming an infinitely wiſe being, would it have been to have made a world and let things run at random, without diſpoſing events, or fore ordaining how they ſhould come to paſs? And what is that to you, how God has fore-ordained things, as long as your conſtant experience teaches you, that that don't hinder your liberty, or your doing what you chooſe to do. This you know, and your daily practice and behaviour amongſt men declares that you are fully ſenſible of it, with reſpect to yourſelf and others. And ſtill to object, becauſe there are ſome things in God's diſpenſations above your underſtanding, is exceeding unreaſonable. Your own conſcience charges you with great guilt, and with thoſe things that have been mention'd, let the ſecret things of God be what they will. Your conſcience charges you with thoſe vile diſpoſitions, and that baſe behaviour towards God, that you would at any time moſt highly reſent in your neighbour towards you, and that not a whit the leſs for any concern thoſe ſecret counſels and myſterious diſpenſations of God, may have in the matter.—It is in vain for you to exalt yourſelf againſt an infinitely great,

great, and holy and juſt God: If you continue in it it will be to your eternal ſhame and confuſion, when hereafter you ſhall ſee at whoſe door all the blame of your miſery lies.

I will finiſh what I have to ſay to natural men, in the application of this doctrine, with a caution not to improve the doctrine to diſcouragement. For though it would be righteous in God forever to caſt you off, and deſtroy you, yet it will alſo be juſt in God to ſave you, in and through Chriſt, who has made compleat ſatisfaction for all ſin. Rom. 3 25, 26. *Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I ſay, at this time his righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.* Yea, God may through this mediator, not only juſtly, but honourably, ſhew you mercy. The blood of Chriſt is ſo precious that it is fully ſufficient to pay that debt that you have contracted, and perfectly to vindicate the divine majeſty from all that diſhonour that has been caſt upon it, by thoſe many great ſins of yours that have been mentioned. It was as great, and indeed a much greater thing, for Chriſt to die, than it would have been for you, and all mankind, to have burnt in hell to all eternity. Of ſuch dignity and excellency is Chriſt in the eyes of God, that ſeeing he has ſuffered ſo much for poor ſinners, God is willing to be at peace with them, however vile and unworthy they have been, and on how many accounts ſoever the puniſhment would be juſt. So that you need not be at all diſcouraged from ſeeking mercy, for there is enough in Chriſt.

Indeed it would not become the glory of God's majeſty, to ſhew mercy to you, that have been ſo

ſinful

ſinful and vile a creature, for any thing that you have done, for ſuch worthleſs and deſpicable things as your prayers, and other religious performances; it would be very diſhonourable and unworthy of God ſo to do, and it is in vain to expect it: He will ſhew mercy only on Chriſt's account, and that according to his ſovereign pleaſure, on whom he pleases, when he pleaſes, and in what manner he pleaſes: You can't bring him under obligation by your works; do what you will, he will not look on himſelf obliged. But if it be his pleaſure, he can honourably ſhew mercy through Chriſt, to any ſinner of you all, not one in this congregation excepted.

Therefore here is enouragement for you ſtill to ſeek and wait, notwithſtanding all your wickedneſs; agreable to *Samuel*'s ſpeech to the children of *Iſrael*, when they were terrified with the thunder and rain that God ſent, and their guilt ſtared them in the face, 1 Sam. 12. 20. *Fear not; ye have done all this wickedneſs; yet turn not aſide from following the Lord; but ſerve the Lord with all your hearts.*

I would conclude this diſcourſe, by improving the doctrine in the ſecond place, very briefly to put the godly in mind of the freeneſs and wonderfulneſs of the grace of God towards them. *For ſuch were ſome of you.*—The caſe was juſt ſo with you, as you have heard; you had ſuch a wicked heart, you lived ſuch a wicked life, and it would have been moſt juſt with God forever to have caſt you off: but he has had mercy upon you; he hath made his glorious grace appear in your everlaſting ſalvation. You behaved yourſelf ſo as youhave heard towards God; you had no love to God, but yet he has exerciſed unſpeakable love to you: You have contemned God, and ſet light by him; but ſo great a value has God's grace ſet on you, and your happineſs, that you

you have been redeemed at the price of the blood of his own ſon: You choſe to be with *Satan* in his ſervice; but yet God hath made you a joint-heir with Chriſt, *of* his glory; You was ungrateful for paſt mercies, but yet God not only continued thoſe mercies, but beſtowed unſpeakably greater mercies upon you: You refuſed to hear when *God called*; but yet God heard you when you called: You abuſed the infiniteneſs of God's mercy to encourage yourſelf in ſin againſt God; but yet God has manifeſted the infiniteneſs of that mercy, in the exerciſes of it towards you: You have rejected Chriſt, and let him at nought; and yet he is become your Saviour: You have neglected your own ſalvation; but God has not neglected it: You have deſtroyed yourſelf; but yet in God has been your help. God has magnified his free grace towards you and not to others; becauſe he has choſen *you*, and it hath pleaſed him to ſet his love upon *you*.

O! What cauſe is here for praiſe? What obligations are upon you to bleſs the Lord, who hath dealt bountifully with you, and to magnify his holy name? What cauſe for you to praiſe him in humility, to walk humbly before God, and to be conformed to that, in Ezek. 16. 63. *That thou mayeſt remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord God!* You ſhould never *open your mouth* in boaſting, or ſelf-juſtification: You ſhould lie the lower before God for his mercy to you. But you have reaſon, the more abundantly for your paſt ſins, *to open your mouth* in God's praiſes, that they may be continually in your mouth, both here and to all eternity, for his rich, unſpeakable, and ſovereign mercy to you, whereby he and he *only* hath made *you* to differ from others.